BLACK AND BRITISH SEASON

Throughout November 2016 and led by programming on BBC TWO and FOUR, with other content across BBC TV, Radio and Online, the Black and British Season will feature bold, vibrant and provocative stories, overturning preconceptions and challenging orthodoxies. The season will cast a fresh light on our history, examining the contribution and impact of black people in UK as well as interrogating just what it means to be black and British today.

TV

BBC TWO

Black & British: A Forgotten History (4x60)

Written and presented by acclaimed historian and broadcaster David Olusoga, Black & British: A Forgotten History is a fresh approach to history and a lively national event. It vividly demonstrates how the often forgotten story of black history has shaped our world and puts BBC TWO at the heart of a moment of national historical reassessment. David Olusoga’s re-telling of our history is a rich and revealing exploration of the extraordinary long relationship between the British Isles and the peoples whose origins are in Africa. Reaching as far back as Roman Britain, David reveals that black British history is an epic story - the story of all of us.
In the four films, specially commissioned BBC Black History plaques are unveiled at locations across Britain, former colonies and the Commonwealth. The plaques record and celebrate people and events that are pivotal to this new history. The BBC’s Black History plaques will be enduring icons of the series.

Drawing on new genetic and genealogical research, original records, expert testimony and contemporary interviews, David skilfully builds a dazzlingly different national narrative filmed in the UK, Africa, the Caribbean and the USA. We meet the African soldiers who guarded Hadrian’s Wall in the third century AD, the black sailors who fought under Nelson at Trafalgar, Queen Victoria’s African god-daughter and the Lancashire cotton workers who supported the abolition of American slavery even when doing so put them on the bread line.

With an exploration of the medieval imagination, the Mappa Mundi and the Tudor Court of Henry VIII, David also finds out how the lives of black and white Britons have been intimately entwined for centuries. He discovers that many white Britons are more black than they realise and that many black Britons are more white than they think.

This is a history full of surprises, scandal and contradictions. It is bristling with emotion, discomforting facts and shocking controversy. The series confronts taboo subjects that are rarely explored - revealing how the Stuart Kings were Britain’s first big slave traders and confronting the fact that many African kingdoms grew rich by trading in slaves.

We meet the sailors of the Royal Navy who fought a 50 year long war against the slave trade, discover why Uncle Tom’s Cabin outsold the novels of Charles Dickens and encounter the black Americans who fled to Britain to escape slavery. We also discover why Charles Darwin used the ‘N’ word as a term of endearment, how the kings of Botswana out manoeuvred Cecil Rhodes by winning over the British public and charming Queen Victoria and how the US army tried to import Jim Crow laws into the Britain during World War Two.

These lost histories are uncovered and re-told in a dynamic and surprising new way. The series overturns the image of black history as a marginal side-bar to mainstream history, or as the property of any one group with new, dramatic and at times shocking chapters from our collective past.

After transmission, viewers will be invited to undertake their own research and follow up opportunities with our partners on the series: Black Cultural Archives; Heritage Lottery Fund; Historic England and The National Archives. The broadcast programmes will be supported by ambitious digital content including a personalised black archive product and a guide to researching your own local black history. There will also be onward journeys to organisations that could help audiences mark any significant discoveries that they make by putting up new plaques to commemorate people and events that have made a contribution to Britain’s black past.

Black & British: A Forgotten History the great sweeping history of our nation with black people written back into a story that belongs to us all.

**Commissioning Editor:** Fatima Salaria;  
**Executive/Series Producer:** Chris Granlund/James Van der Pool; **Director & Producer:** James Van der Pool/Naomi Austin; **Production Company:** BBC Studios
Black is the New Black (4x30)

Across four films, this landmark series features 40 exceptional figures drawn from the world of politics, business, culture, religion and science who face the camera and share their experiences of being black and British.

Beautifully shot by artist and director Simon Frederick, the line-up of influential individuals reveal their heartfelt stories and unfiltered opinions to paint a unique portrait of modern Britain’s past, present and future.

Conceptually unique, Black is the New Black surprises, delights and at times shocks audiences by relying solely on the words spoken by our line-up of distinguished individuals. With no archive or voiceover, their voices resonate with emotion across a wide range of subjects including: the stories and warnings passed down by parents who first encountered Britain as immigrants and the harsh experience of racism they faced; the emergence of black British culture and its flourishing against the odds; the fight for identity and recognition; and the new found sense of national pride Britain now projects onto the world as one of the most diverse nations on earth.

The message of the series is simple. Let’s begin talking openly and honestly about what it means to be British in the 21st century by giving a voice to a group of people who collectively illuminate the highs and lows of our small island’s turbulent history. At a time of huge uncertainty and fear, let’s rediscover of our place in the world together.

Contributors include: Naomi Campbell, Malorie Blackman, Lenny Henry, Trevor McDonald, Reggie Yates, Thandie Newton, Baroness Patricia Scotland, John Sentamu, Archbishop of York, Ozwald Boateng, Alesha Dixon and Tinie Tempah.

Commissioning Editor: Maxine Watson; Executive Producer: Anna Smith Tenser & Roy Ackerman; Production Company: Iconoclast & Pulse Films co-production

Back in Time for Brixton (2x60)

For one summer, the Irwin family agreed to give up their modern home and lives and travel back in time to experience 50 years of black British history and discover how post-war Caribbean immigration transformed the way we all live today.

As the family journey through history they are guided by presenters Giles Coren and social historian Emma Dabiri, who introduce them to the very different homes they’ll be living in. At key moments the family are joined by surprise celebrity guests who help them to understand pivotal moments in black British history. In episode one, dad Weininger and son Shelasah meet 60s singer Kenny Lynch, then in 1959 the whole family is surprised by EastEnders star Rudolph Walker. In episode two they are joined by West Indies cricketing star Clive Lloyd, singer and actor Janet Kay and musical legend Jazzie B.

Commissioning Editor: Donna Clark; Executive Producer: Emma Hindley; Production Company: Wall to Wall Ltd
Whites Vs Blacks (1x60)

On the 16 May 1979, an extraordinary game of professional football took place that if played today, would very possibly cause uproar, mass protest and a media frenzy.

As part of Len Cantello’s testimonial at West Bromwich Albion, an all-white team took on a side comprised solely of black players – ‘Whites against Blacks’.

For the white team it was nothing more than a light-hearted gimmick, but for the black players it represented so much more. It was a game they had to win. Racism was rife and black people were far from welcome on the pitch, in the stands or in the boardroom.

In this film, Adrian Chiles journeys across England to discover the truths, taboos and real meaning behind this remarkable game. He uncovers rarely seen footage and reunites players from both teams, including Cyril Regis, Brendan Batson and Ally Robertson.

Today, 30 per cent of English professionals are black. They are role models and superstars, some earning in excess of £100,000 a week. On the surface, everything seems rosy but how far have we really come?

Through encounters with stars like Ian Wright, Les Ferdinand, Dion Dublin, Jason Roberts and Sol Campbell, Adrian contrasts the attitudes and conflicts that swirled around that infamous game with the reality of being a black player in the modern era.

Commissioning Editor: Fatima Salaria; Executive Producer: Narinder Minhas; Production Company: Sugar Films

Will Britain Ever Have a Black Prime Minister? (1x60)

To date there have been 54 British Prime Ministers over three centuries and they have one thing in common - they are all white. How long before that changes?

David Harewood is one of Britain’s leading black actors. He made it from a working class background to Hollywood – but how difficult would it be for a black child to make it to our country’s top job? Do they face greater hurdles than any other child?

To find out, David travels across the UK and explores whether the system has obstacles - such as unconscious or institutional bias, unequal economic backgrounds - and whether these mean it could be tougher for black people to make it to Britain’s top professions. His journey takes him from a nursery in Birmingham, via Oxford all the way to Parliament and Downing Street.

His findings aren’t just anecdotal; the BBC has commissioned research from Economics and Inequalities Statistician, Dr. Faiza Shaheen. She has studied the data, exclusively for the documentary, and has worked out the differences in life chances between black and white children.

Commissioning Editor: Fiona Campbell; Executive Producer: Mike Radford; Production Company: BBC Current Affairs
Life and Death the Pentecostal Way (1x60)

Pentecostalism is now the largest Christian faith in London. What is it about this rapidly growing religion that makes it so appealing?

Black Majority Pentecostal churches in particular are one of the big success stories of the black community in Britain. Their numbers are rising faster than any other Christian faith while the Church of England is seeing its congregation shrinking.

Life and Death the Pentecostal Way gives us unprecedented access to the congregation and staff of one of the first Caribbean Black Majority Pentecostal churches in this country - Brixton New Testament Church of God - to discover how this religion has been so successful. We witness its charismatic sermons, passionate worshipping, the full-immersion baptism of teenagers and the fabulous hats and attire of the characterful older members of the congregation.

This one-hour observational documentary follows the stories of members of the congregation at defining moments in their lives. Through powerful personal testimony it lifts the lid on a vibrant faith that is fast becoming one of the dominant religions in Britain.

Executive Producer: Aaqil Ahmed; Director & Producer: Tanya Stephan; Production Company: BBC Studios

Roots Reggae Rebellion (1x60)

In the 1970s Jamaica came alive to the sounds of Roots Reggae. In Roots Reggae Rebellion British rapper, poet and political commentator Akala tells the story of this golden period in the island’s musical history; a time when a small group of musicians took songs of black power, revolution and Rastafari to the international stage.

The documentary explores the music’s origins in Jamaica where it offered hope to ordinary people in times of immense political struggle, helping to unite the country in a period of near civil war. Artists like Bob Marley, Big Youth, Peter Tosh, The Abyssinians and Burning Spear feature, as Akala unpicks the evolution of Roots Reggae. It was a time when many Jamaicans turned to the religious movement of Rastafari as a reaction to the poverty, gang crime and political turmoil that was ravaging the island.

For the Caribbean diaspora here in the UK, this music acted as a news service, a history lesson and a connection back home. Akala reveals how Jamaican artists and our own British Roots Reggae bands like Steel Pulse and Matumbi became a cultural lifeline for young black people who were experiencing a civil rights struggle of their own.

Commissioning Editor: Emma Cahusac; Executive Producer: James Hayes; Production Company: Lazerbeam
Young, Gifted and Classical: The Making of a Maestro (1x60)

Sheku Kanneh-Mason, winner of this year’s BBC Young Musician, is the subject of a BBC Four documentary exploring issues of diversity in classical music. The 17-year-old cellist wowed audiences with his virtuosity this summer in the grand finale of BBC Young Musician 2016. He not only won one of the most prestigious titles in classical music but also entered the history books as the first black winner of the competition.

This observational documentary follows Sheku, his parents Stuart and Kadiatu, and his six brothers and sisters, all of whom are also gifted in classical music. It explores issues of diversity and access in classical music as well as looking at the human story and sacrifices that parents Stuart and Kadiatu made in order to support their children in pursuing their dreams.

Featuring interviews with Julian Lloyd Webber and Nicola Benedetti, the documentary follows Sheku’s musical journey since winning BBC Young Musician, navigating the many opportunities that have come his way.

The programme also shines a light on the Chineke Foundation, which was founded by Chi-chi Nwanoku, and follows the Chineke! Orchestra, featuring Sheku and some of his siblings, as they prepare for a special concert at the Royal Festival Hall, London.

Commissioning Editor: Emma Cahusac; Executive Producer: Bridget Boseley; Production Company: Outline Productions

Black Midwives (1x60)

Black Midwives is a documentary which reveals the untold story of thousands of Caribbean women who answered the call from “the Mother Country” to come and help build Britain’s National Health Service. It is a story of ambition, survival, integration and, ultimately, triumph told for the first time by the women themselves and never seen before archive. The film explores the price paid by these pioneering women – many of whom were just teenagers at the time – for leaving their families, friends and culture behind as they sought a new life in the UK. And it examines what post-war Britain made of these “foreigners”, their impact on British society and cultural legacy both here and abroad.

Contributors include: 77 year-old Lynette Richards-Lorde, a former midwife and the first black director of Nursing in the UK; 74 year-old Nola Ishmael OBE, the first black professional private secretary to the chief nurse of England; and 84 year-old Zena Edmund-Charles OBE who was a midwife and a nurse for 58 years and loved midwifery so much that each time she retired (three times) she went back to work.

Commissioning Editor: Fatima Salaria; Executive Producer: Paul Blake; Production Company: Maroon Productions

Radio

Radio 1Xtra

Radio 1Xtra hosts two live discussion shows during the Black and British season on 9 and 16 November.

The first comes from the Live Lounge and tackles the topic of Identity. It features a panel of high profile guests and will be available to stream on Facebook Live.

The second discussion show takes place in front of a live audience in the BBC’s Radio Theatre and includes live music performances and
Guests across the two debates include: Big Narstie, Leomie Anderson, Shakka, Jamelia, Emma Dabiri and more.

Both discussion shows will be supported across social media to encourage discussion online.

And to get the conversation started Seani B is presenting a no holds barred, 60 minute documentary, Black is a Dirty Word, at the beginning of November. This provocative look at the black British experience in 2016 focuses on everyday life and the challenges faced by young black British youth.

Debates: Executive Producer: Janine Kempadoo and Will Saunders; Production Company: 1Xtra in collaboration with BBC Studios

Documentary: Commissioning Editor: Andy Worrell; Executive Producer: Janine Kempadoo; Production Company: Playmaker

Radio 1 will be supporting the content of their sister channel on air and on social media.

Radio 2 and 3 bring the season focus to the black British contribution to the UK’s music scene, as singer, songwriter, restauranteur and sauce baron Levi Roots delivers his special brand of fun to Radio 2 for four live programmes, playing the very best in reggae music from across the decades and bridging the miles between Kingston & Kingston Upon Thames. The series starts 16 November.

While on 8 November Radio 3’s In Tune celebrates Black Britain with a special programme live from Maida Vale studios with live performance and guests from the fields of classical, jazz and world music. Suzy Klein hosts with guest presenter leading baritone Roderick Williams. (4.30-6.30pm)

On Radio 4 the station’s topical and arts programmes will be supporting the season in their November output. While the BBC’s bespoke specialist community programmes, UK Black, spanning 14 regions across England will be getting involved, as will local radio more generally, taking the Black and British conversation right around the country.

**Online Content**

**BBC THREE**

Sunny D (4x25)

Comedian Dane Baptiste stars in a new, irreverent and anarchic take on the sitcom, full of black British heroes from the comic urban circuit and classic acting talent like Don Warrington of Rising Damp.

In Sunny D, Dane is deeply frustrated with life. He is approaching 30 and still lives with his parents in his childhood bedroom - an arrangement nobody is particularly happy about. He hates his job and is desperately ambitious for the finer things in life.
In the first episode Dane’s family are celebrating his Dad’s (Don Warrington) birthday with a party. The milestone is an unwelcome reminder for Dane that he’s yet to achieve any of his goals in life. To make matters worse, his relatives compare Dane with his twin sister Kadean (Gbemisola Ikumelo); his perfect cousin Christian (Akemnji Indifornyen) and his high achieving girlfriend Nicola (Sasha Frost).

Dane seeks solace at the party with his Dad and his friends but after having one too many of his Dad’s special birthday rum, Dane makes an unforgettable announcement. Will he regret it?

In the next three episodes Dane’s life lurches from crisis to crisis, until – after receiving some advice from one of his all-time heroes – he’s forced to make some life changing decisions.

Commissioning Editor: Shane Allan; Executive Producer: Rebecca Papworth; Production Company: BBC Studios

The Story of Grime (4x8)
The Story of Grime is a new short form documentary series for BBC Three that tells the story of Grime through the art and culture of ‘the Clash’ – a war of words between Emcees that leaves the best artist standing.

Featuring Radio 1Xtra presenter A Dot, it charts her attempt to set up the ultimate Grime Clash/Royal Rumble - ‘GRIMEAGEDDON’ - allowing her to get under the skin of the modern grime scene along the way.

Offering his backing, contacts and advice to Dotty is clashing expert, Lord of The Mic’s founder and Boy Better Know member ‘Jammer’. Also featured are The Godfather of Grime ‘Wiley’, DJs Sian Edwards, Logan Sama and DJ Target, MOBO nominated and RATED award winning Newcomer Emcee ‘AJ Tracey’, as well as interviews with Coco, Jammz, Nolay, Prez T, Big Zuu, Ghetts, JayKae, Dapz on the Map, GRM Daily CEO ‘Posty’ and a host of others.

The Series will culminate in ‘Grimeageddon’, a Grime clash ‘cypher’ event, complete with an audience scoring the battling artists, to be filmed and recorded in the historic John Peel, Studio (4) at the BBC’s Maida Vale Studios.

Commissioning Editor: Max Gogarty; Executive Producer: Will Saunders; Production Company: BBC Studios in association with BBCRadio1Xtra Lord of the Mics & GRM Daily

Let’s Settle This (4x6)

Let’s Settle This gives the BBC Three audience a short, sharp injection of MC Big Narstie as he tackles debates that are happening right now on social networks.

He’ll be scouring social media for those ongoing arguments that strike him as funny, weird or downright offensive and barging in on them in a way that only Big Narstie can. He’ll not only join the debate, in his upfront and in your face manner, but he will finally ‘settle it’, with a video response on the BBC Three social platforms.

The debates will be carefully selected to pull out an unforgettable Narstie rant, playing on physical humour and his political slant.

Commissioning Editor: Max Gogarty; Executive Producer: Will Saunders; Production Company: BBC Studios

In additional BBC Three’s short form and written journalism team will be providing topical and timely pieces to accompany the season.
Black British Hero

Black British Hero is a landmark BBC Two social media campaign which will run across the BBC’s social media accounts this autumn.

The campaign will feature celebrities, BBC stars and major institutions celebrating the Black British Hero who has inspired them in their life or career, whether they are eminent professionals, stars of sport and entertainment, local heroes or ground-breaking talent.

Those confirmed as taking part in the campaign and nominating their Black British Hero include Tinie Tempah, Baroness Amos, Andrew Marr, Maggie Aderin-Pocock, Gabby Logan, Beverley Knight and Lenny Henry, amongst many more.

Each Black British Hero will be nominated using short form video and images, and audiences at home are encouraged to nominate their own Black British Hero too using the campaign hashtag, whether they’re from the world of celebrity or their local community.

The campaign will also see the BBC link-up with the BFI’s Black Star initiative as they announce their Top Ten Black British Film and TV Performances.

While BBC Outreach will work with a group of around 90 16-18 year olds to create videos about their black British heroes, and will be inviting community groups across the UK to get involved too.

Highlights of the campaign and audience nominations will be curated on the season webpage.

Commissioning Editor: Tom McDonald; Executive Producer: Will Saunders; Production Company: BBC Studios

Black and British Season Webpage

All of the Black and British digital content will curated on the season webpage: www.bbc.co.uk/blackandbritish.

The site will be the portal to bespoke BBC content from teams including BBC Digital Current Affairs and BBC Arts Online, as well as brand new and archive material from partner organisations to support the season.

iWonder Guides

iWonder will also produce two guides for the Black and British season.

Broadcaster and historian, David Olusoga, will present How can I uncover the hidden stories of Britain’s black history? The guide will show users how to uncover information on their region, community and interests with the aim of inspiring people to take the first steps towards their own historical project.
Emma Dabiri will present a timeline of Twelve great black Britons who made history. The writer and broadcaster will unveil her choice of pioneers and trailblazers who shaped British history.

Several outreach and discussion events to complement the season, as well as supporting it on social media including through the alignment of their own campaign Unsung Heroes. BCA is also working with Google Cultural Institute to create a Google Expedition for 7-11 year olds on Black & British: A Surprising History based around several of the Black Plaques and launching a Google Arts and Culture site with several virtual exhibitions including an exhibition based around the Black Plaques.

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is actively supporting the season through social media and will be providing pages of supporting content, particularly regarding projects featured in Black & British: A Forgotten History. More generally HLF is encouraging applications for grants from community groups and organisations inspired by the series, to undertake further research around the subject of Black History. There will also be additional complementary content around HLF’s Changing Lives campaign and HLF supported projects involving African and Caribbean participants.

Historic England is opening up the National Heritage List for England and encouraging people to ‘enrich’ it by adding any recently uncovered black history to the background information on already listed buildings and places. Historic England is also announcing the new listing of buildings and monuments with a specific black history and launching an illustrated walking tour of Brixton via their Walk History app. Historic England will also be participating in the social media campaign.

The National Archives has published a resource (http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/black-history) to support the discovery of documents relating to black British history within The National Archives’ collections. A series of talks and workshops will also be taking place throughout November.

Note to Editors: All programme titles are working titles and transmission details may be subject to change.